



Bemidji Area IHS Sleep Safe Program Increases Smoke Alarm Use

American Indian and Alaska Native (AI/AN) children are at high risk of death due to house fires. Residential fires are the third leading cause of death for AI/AN children ages 1-4. Smoke alarms nearly double the chances of surviving a house fire, yet many reservation homes do not have adequate numbers of working smoke alarms.

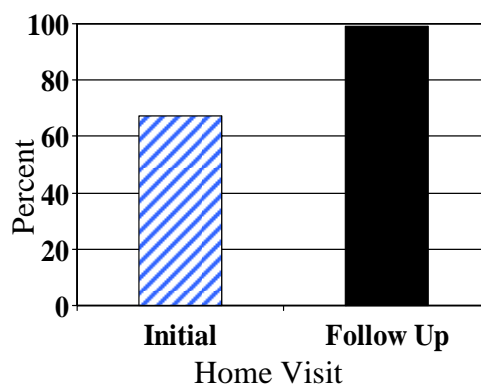


The Sleep Safe Program. Head Starts are uniquely suited for implementing injury prevention projects because of their contact with children and parents. Since 1999, the AI/AN Programs Branch of the Head Start Bureau, Indian Health Service, and US Fire Administration have collaborated on the Sleep Safe Program. The goal of this program is to reduce residential fire-related injuries in AI/AN HS children by providing a curriculum for program development and parent/student education, smoke alarms for installation; and an annual program coordinator's training workshop. Photoelectric smoke alarms are provided because they are less sensitive to false alarms from cooking, an important contextual factor in AI/AN communities.

Results. During the first five years of the program, 20 Bemidji Area Head Start sites have participated in the Sleep Safe Program. They have distributed more than 6,000 smoke alarms, established community partnerships, and expanded activities into preventing other childhood injuries (e.g., carbon monoxide poisoning and motor vehicle crash-related injury).

Program evaluation revealed significant increases in the number of homes with at least one working smoke alarms --from 67% to 99% during 2006. Since smoke alarms are proven strategies in preventing residential fire death, increases in smoke alarm usage rates imply that lives have been saved due to this program.

Bemidji Area Sleep Safe Sites*, Percent
of Homes with at Least One Working
Smoke Alarm, 2006



*Data from seven reporting sites, 2006

For more information about the Bemidji Area IHS Sleep Safe Program, contact Diana Kuklinski, 218-444-0503, diana.kuklinski@mail.ihs.gov